



BECOMING A FOSTER CARER

A GUIDE TO FOSTERING WITH
PARALLEL PARENTS

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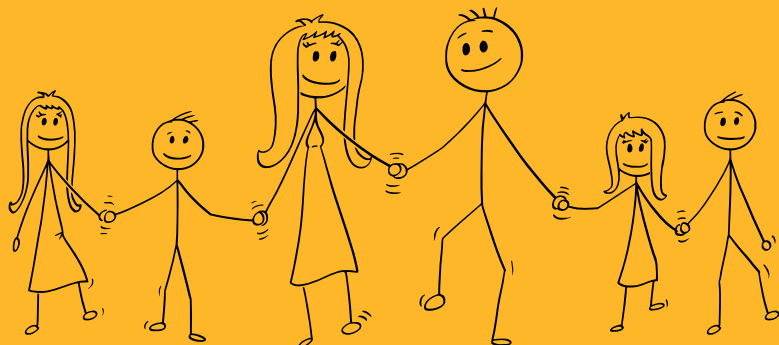
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FOSTER FOR PARALLEL PARENTS!

Parallel Parents is an independent fostering agency that has been established for over 25 years. We are a family owned and run agency, and believe that our child-focused approach makes us really stand out from other agencies.

We are proud to have achieved the highest rating, "**Outstanding**" by Ofsted in our last 4 inspections, since 2010!



We always aim to provide young people with the best possible experience of being looked after, the opportunity and support to achieve positive outcomes and feel safe, and the confidence and motivation to aspire to do their best.

We continually strive to improve our service provision, with an emphasis on matching, quality, support and safeguarding.

We strive to offer excellent support to our foster carers so that they can, in turn, provide the best possible level of care to the young people they look after. We want our hero foster carers to be the best that they can be! We are committed to providing consistently high standards of care to young people, and our experienced team of Foster Care Development Workers support a range of different, needs-led placements that are able to meet the diverse, individual and often complex needs of the young people we look after.

Our first priority is always the child or young person in our care. We believe that children have the right to a safe, stable and nurturing foster home, and our overarching aim is to recruit skilled and resilient foster carers who are able to offer children a positive substitute family experience where it is not possible for them to live with their own family.

TYPES OF FOSTERING

There are different types of fostering to suit all different types of young people and fostering families.

Foster carers are not expected to do all types of fostering, but tend to specialise in one or two types of fostering.

SHORT TERM FOSTERING!

This type of foster carer can provide a home for young people up to two years, usually a few days or weeks, until their long-term plan is ready. Children often go back to live with their birth families after a short-term placement, or to live with long-term foster carers.

LONG TERM FOSTERING!

Long term placements are for foster carers who can provide a home for children with the intention of them being there for a number of years, or until the child is able to live independently.

EMERGENCY FOSTERING!

These foster carers provide a home for children who need a stable environment urgently, any time of the day or night. This is usually on a short term basis.



RESPITE FOSTERING!

These foster carers would be able to look after a young person short term whilst their long term foster carers have a short break. This could last anything from a few hours to a few weeks dependent on the young person and the carers needs.

PARENT & BABY FOSTERING!

With parent & baby, foster carers provide a nurturing home in which young parents can be taught skills to support and aid them to care for their baby. As a foster carer your focus is supporting the mum or dad while they look after their baby.

SPECIALIST DISABILITY FOSTERING!

Homes for specialist disability fostering are specifically tailored for children with physical, developmental, sensory or intellectual disabilities - foster carers are trained on how to help the young person and may be given additional support throughout the placement.

REMAND FOSTERING!

Although there is minimal requirement for this, remand foster carers provide a short-term home in which young offenders, or children awaiting criminal conviction, can live.

CAN ANYONE FOSTER?

People foster for all sorts of reasons and at different stages of life. Our carers come from all walks of life, some have experience of bringing up their own children, others have worked with disadvantaged children and young people before, and others foster because they want to make a difference and help children in need. You do not need to be a parent yourself or have extensive childcare experience as we provide all the training and support you will need!

We need carers who have life experience from all types of backgrounds, religions, sexualities, cultures, experience / abilities in parenting etc. It is important that you can provide a safe and stable home, provide a bedroom for them to sleep in, care about their welfare and be able to provide support to the child and have a mature attitude!

We ask that you do need to consider the impact fostering a child within your family may have. Fostering means professionals visiting your home, taking the child on contact visits, taking them to appointments and on activities. Whilst the looked after child's needs are our #1 priority, your family's thoughts on the fostering process also matter to us.

No upper age limit

You can foster whether you're 25 or 78, as long as you are committed to make a difference to children and young people.

You already work?

When you become a foster carer the children you look after will be your first priority but, as long as your job is flexible, working alongside fostering is fine.

You've got kids at home?

You can foster whether you have children or not as long as you have a spare bedroom. We will make sure any children you foster fit well with your family and your circumstances.

You're LGBTQ+?

You can be a foster carer regardless of gender or orientation. It's your personality and character that makes you a good foster carer.

You're religious?

There are thousands of children needing foster families and they come from a variety of religious and racial backgrounds, and can settle well with foster carers with similar beliefs.



- You must be over 21
- You must have a spare bedroom
- You must be a British citizen or have the legal right to work in the UK
- Ideally be able to drive with access to a car

YOUR FOSTERING JOURNEY..

Step 1

Get in touch

When you get in touch we can answer any questions you have about fostering and chat to you about your interest in becoming a foster carer.

This can be via our website
www.ParallelParents.com,
email
hello@parallelparents.com
or phone **0800 023 4450!**

Step 2

Home Visit

Once we've had a brief chat, one of our social workers will arrange to visit you at home to explain what fostering involves and to find out more about you and your circumstances.

Step 3

Application

When you're ready a social worker will help you complete an application pack so your enquiry can be taken to the next stage. This is then sent to head office for approval.

Step 4

Assessment & Training

Your social worker will visit you at home over a few weeks to complete the fostering assessment which is a report written about you and your family, your life experiences, and your skills.

As part of this we attain references from your friends, family and employers and request criminal record checks, Local Authority checks and ask you to have a medical assessment.

You'll also be invited to our Skills to Foster training course that helps you to prepare practically for being a foster carer.

Step 5

Fostering panel

When your assessment is completed it will be presented to the fostering panel by your social worker. The panel will make a recommendation to the manager of Parallel Parents so that a final decision can be made about you becoming a foster carer.

You become an approved foster carer!

Step 6

When you have been approved you are ready to go! Your social worker will link with you to find the right child or children for you to foster. They will carry on training you and will be on hand 24/7 to support you every step of the way.

WHY CHOOSE PARALLEL PARENTS?!

We believe the best way of finding out if Parallel Parents is the agency for you, is to ask our existing carers.

Below is what some of our carers have to say about fostering with us...

“ Parallel Parents is a very caring agency. It is not like being part of a corporate organisation; instead it is more like being part of a family. ”

“ Our social worker is always available to offer help and support when needed. Our foster child always looks forward to seeing her and even tidies his room when he knows she is going to visit us! ”

“ Parallel Parents helped me realise my true potential as a foster carer and I hope to achieve more in the future. ”



We also have 24/7 on hand support from our fantastic support team. We have an excellent in house training provider, we invest in our foster carers to give them the opportunity to develop their careers.

Our agency offers a generous fostering allowance paid monthly.

Parallel Parents also run fostering resource centres, these centres offer a variety of support strategies to more complex and challenging fostering placements, such as outreach work to meet the specific needs of the young person, residential respite and family intervention work.

Parallel Parents have also been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted for their last 4 inspections since 2010! We have also been awarded Investors in People Platinum!

STILL NOT CONVINCED?

We're always looking for ways to improve and asking for feedback. Here are some facts and statistics from our surveys and feedback sessions with all of our carers in 2021.

99.8% of our carers said they were happy with fostering!

96% of our carers have rated the support they received as 7/10 or above, with over 70% of the ratings being 10/10.



Not a single young person in our care has said that they were unhappy with their foster family.

FROM A SURVEY OF
452 CARERS AND
YOUNG PEOPLE
SINCE 2021

FAQ's

How long does it take to become a Foster Carer?

It usually takes about six months to become a foster carer. Once you have been approved you could have your first placement the next day but it's more likely that you'll wait a few weeks for the right child for you and your family. For more information on the process of becoming a foster carer get in touch.

What checks are carried out for me to become a foster carer?

When you apply to be a foster carer you will have a criminal record check and a medical assessment. We'll also request a check from your Local Authority and will get references from your friends, family and employer.

Do I need to be able to drive?

Just like any child, fostered children need to be taken to school, go on outings and visit their family and friends. Being able to drive makes all this a lot easier, but if you cannot drive fostering is still open to you as long as you have good access to public transport.

Can I still work if I foster?

When you become a foster carer the children you look after will be your first priority but, as long as your job is flexible, working alongside fostering is fine.

How much will I know about the child before they are placed with me?

We like to be open with our foster carers so will give you as much information as possible about the child you might be looking after, including any behavioural or emotional difficulties which they may have. We always do as much as we can to ensure that the child will fit in well with your circumstances, and you will be continually supported whilst they are with you.

Do foster children have contact with their birth parents?

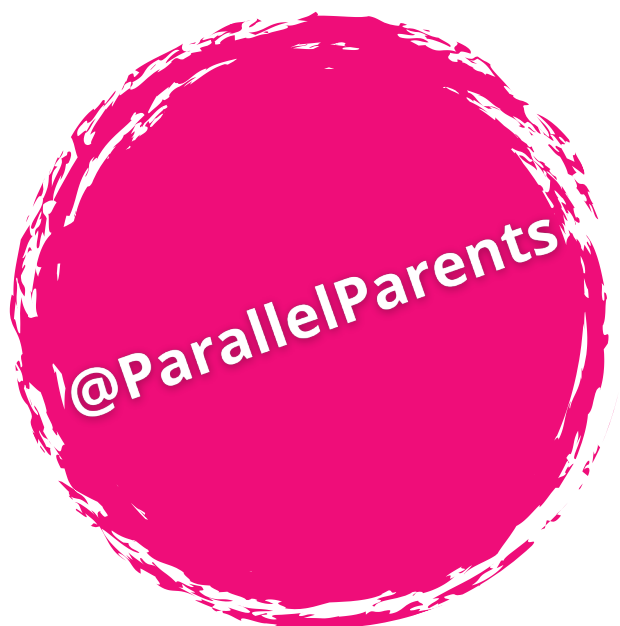
Children go into foster care for all sorts of reasons – sometimes because they have been abused or neglected and other times because their parents have a short-term illness. Therefore, wherever it is appropriate, fostered children meet up with their birth family during scheduled visits.

Follow us online!



Find us online to see what we're up to!

We love keeping everyone up to date online. Whether it's events we're attending or organising, sharing stories, or spreading uplifting good news about the achievements of our young people, there's always positivity to promote! Give us a follow!



Good news stories!



Events and updates!



Competitions!



Parallel Parents

POSITIVE FLEXIBLE FOSTERING

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